

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE AT 9 TAYLOR STREET

HEYWOOD, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: June 2025

Purpose: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Site survey: Peter Miller

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposals affecting number 9 Taylor Street, Heywood, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The premises are a former health department office building, now converted to mixed use.

The property stands to the north of the Grade II listed Church of St Joseph and its presbytery. Also within its vicinity are the locally-designated former public baths on Taylor Street, and the former police station on Hind Hill Street.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the application property to apartments and alteration of a side extension to form a separate dwelling. The principal heritage consideration arising, as regards the external aspects of the works only, is the impact upon the setting and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of St Joseph's as it is the statutorily-designated heritage asset. The impact upon the locally-designated buildings is a secondary matter. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and how the proposal affects it.

The significance of St Joseph's derives from the intrinsic special architectural and historic interest which has warranted its designation, being that of a large Romanesque Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery of 1913-1916. The contribution made by its setting essentially derives from how this large building visually dominates the architecturally-mixed but comparatively modest surrounding streetscene.

The application property is of local significance to Heywood for its architectural and historic interest as former health offices of 1933, part of a small civic group of which the police station and former baths also remain. This significance is embodied in the original main block, in particular its publicly-visible front and side elevations, and its contribution to the architectural diversity of the surrounding streetscene. Its late 20th century side extension is of little interest and therefore of low importance.

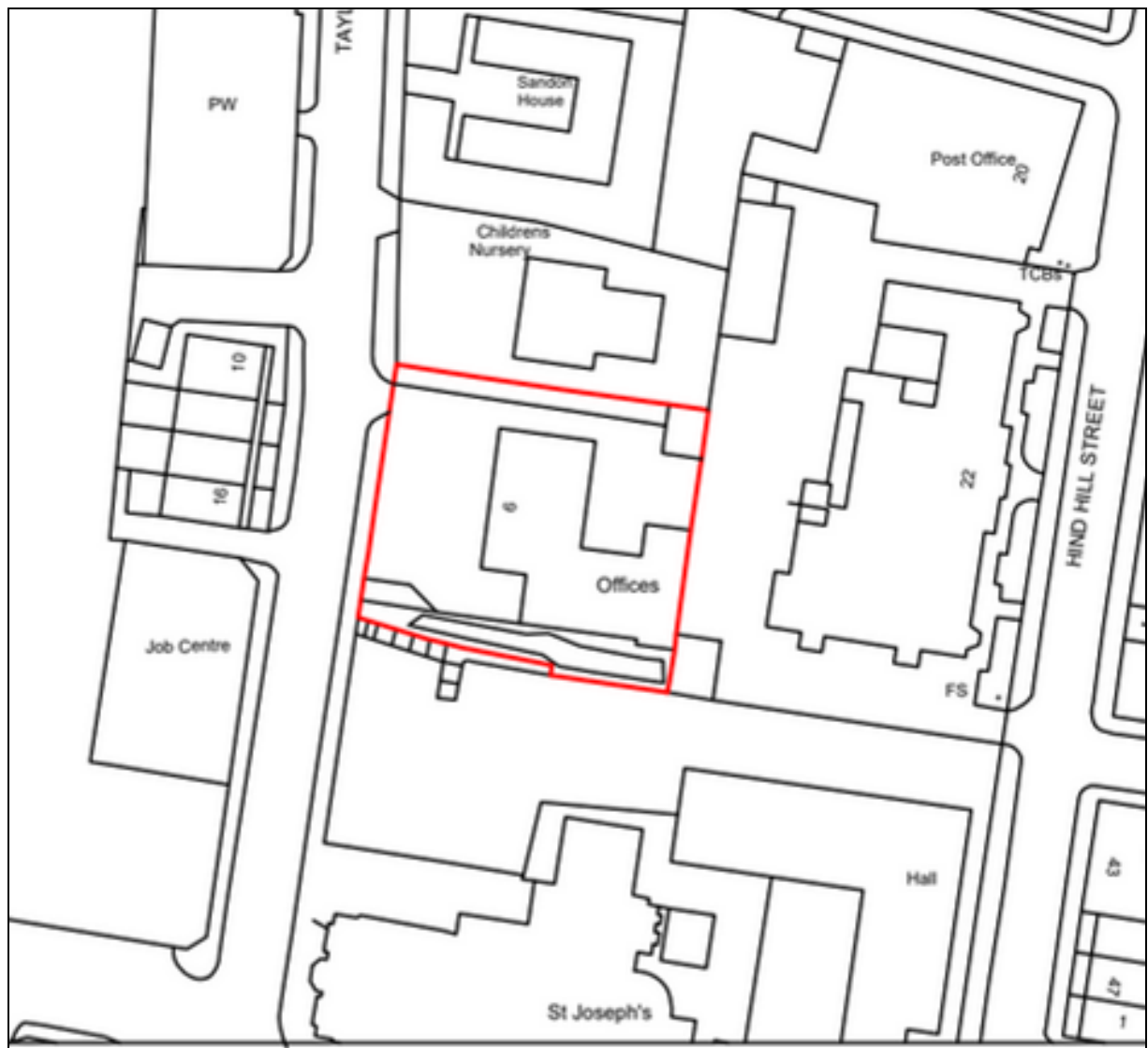
The application seeks consent for four self-contained apartments including alterations to fenestration on the side and rear elevations and demolition of part of the side extension to form one detached dwelling to the rear of the site.

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. As established in this report, its significance and contribution to the setting of the listed St Joseph's resides in the external envelope of the 1933 main block, which will remain largely unaltered. The only changes will be rooflights on the rear elevation, of which there will be no views in the public realm, and alteration of a ground floor window on the south side elevation to a doorway. The changes are focussed mainly upon the low-importance side extension, which will be partly removed and altered to form a separate one-and-a-half storey dwelling detached from and to the rear of the main building, thereby better revealing the original form of the latter. It will still however retain its subservience to the original building.

For these reasons, it is concluded the proposal will result in no appreciable change to the setting of St Joseph's, which will therefore be sustained and allow the predominant role of the church to remain. In respect of the secondary matter of the setting of the locally-designated buildings, this will also be sustained for the same reasons. The proposal thereby meets the requirements of both national guidance and local planning policy and so merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is located on the southwestern fringe of the town centre of Heywood, one of the communities within the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Number 9 Taylor Street is a former health department office building that is now in mixed use. It consists of the main building of 1933 and a late 20th century single-storey side extension.



Location of the application building



The application property is former health authority offices, now in mixed use



The building within the Taylor Street streetscene

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the application property to apartments and alteration of the side extension to form a separate dwelling.

3.2 Designations

The property stands to the north of the Grade II listed Church of St Joseph and its presbytery. Also within its vicinity are the locally-designated former public baths on Taylor Street, and the former police station on Hind Hill Street.

3.3 Heritage impact

The principal heritage consideration arising, as regards the external aspects of the works only, is the impact upon the setting and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the St Joseph's as it is the statutorily-designated heritage asset. The impact upon the locally-designated buildings is a secondary matter.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 207 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, December 2024) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset affected. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the conservation area and the contribution made by the application building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 207, the level of detail is considered strictly proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal.

This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A concise, proportionate description of the listed building and its setting (Section 4) and of the application building (Section 5)
2. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the proposal's impact upon the setting and significance of the listed building (Section 8).

4: THE LISTED BUILDING

4.1 Summary

St Joseph's is a large Romanesque-style church prominently located at the junction of Taylor Street and Mary Street. It was opened in 1916, replacing an earlier church founded in 1854. The Historic England National Heritage List description is lengthy, and can be accessed at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1420726>

The overview reads:

Roman Catholic church and presbytery. 1913-16 by Henry Oswald Hill (d.1917). North transept added between 1929 and 1937, baptistery off nave and larger, south entrance porch built prior to 1969, organ loft extension to north transept built after 1969. Mosaics by Eric Newton. Romanesque style. Mottled buff and grey brick with hard red brick dressings, Westmorland slate roofs.



St Joseph's, a large Romanesque church of 1913-1916

4.2 Setting

The church is the defining feature of the Taylor Street/Mary Street junction. It stands within an architecturally mixed streetscene that comprises traditional and recent buildings and owing to its scale and massing dominates its modestly-built surroundings.



The church is the predominant building amid its immediate surroundings

5: THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

5.1 Overview

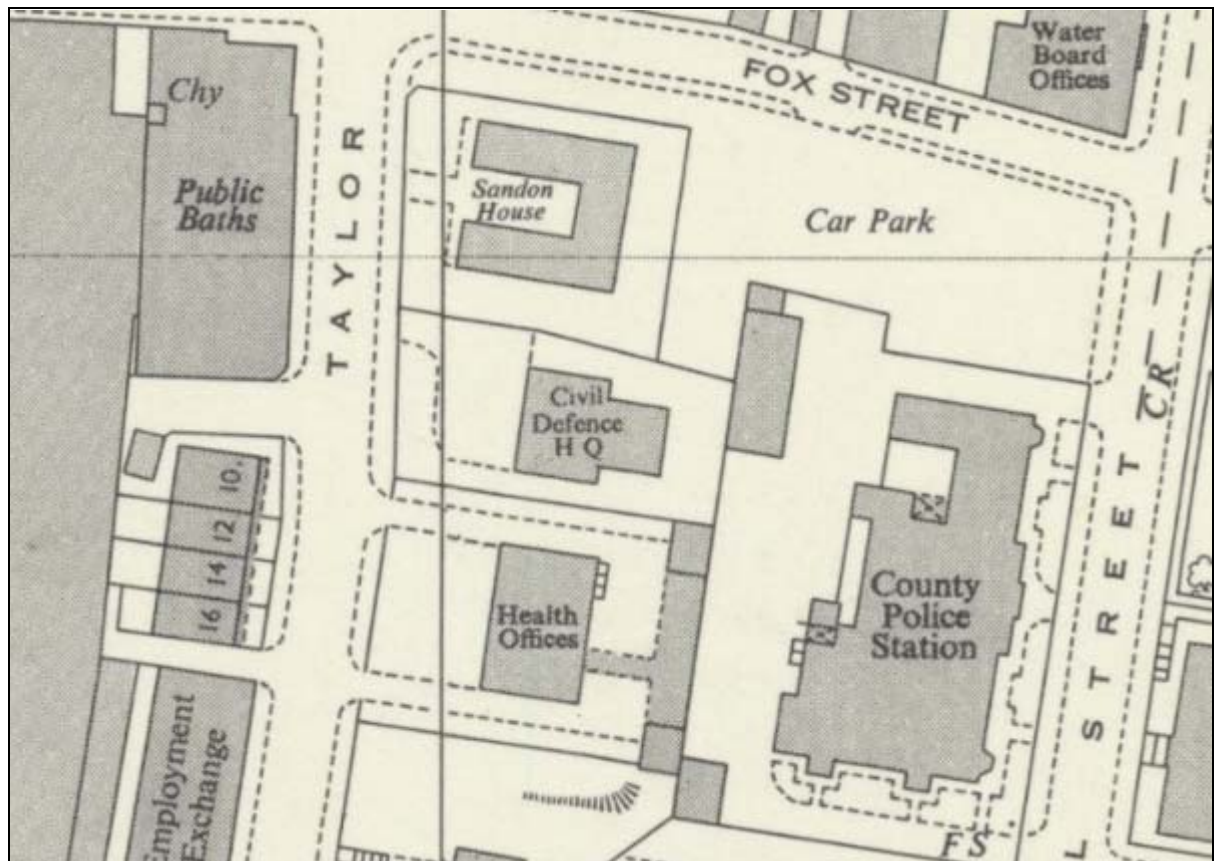
Former health offices of 1930 with later addition, now in mixed use.

5.2 Historical background

The property dates from 1933 and was built as public health offices. The OS edition of 1936 (below) shows the site consisted of the main building with what appears to be a glazed link to a pair of small outbuildings at the rear of the site which were joined by a further glazed structure. It subsequently formed a small group of civic buildings along with the police station of 1935 to the east, public baths to the northwest and a civil defence centre to the north, as shown on the OS edition of 1957 (following page).



The building depicted by the 25-inch OS map of 1936



The edition of 1957 shows the offices formed part of a small civic group



The building is dated 1933

5.3 Description

The property is a two-storey structure in brick with a hipped slate roof, set back from Taylor Street behind a car park. It is designed in a modest inter-war Neoclassical style and is a distinctive feature of the Taylor Street streetscene. Its symmetrical five-bay frontage has vertical windows with decorative lintels and a central entrance in stone surround which extends upwards to incorporate a deep stair window and ends in a projecting cornice above a coat of arms, the inscription HEALTH OFFICES and the date 1933. The two-bay side elevations are comparatively plain. On the south side is a single-storey brick extension probably of the late 20th century which partly wraps around the rear. The rear elevation of the building is, in contrast to the front, irregular with a variety of windows and faces an enclosed courtyard.



The front elevation is a distinctive feature of the Taylor Street streetscene



The rear elevation has an irregular appearance in contrast to the front



The single-storey side extension



The single-storey extension viewed from the rear courtyard

6: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 The listed building

The significance of St Joseph's derives from the intrinsic special architectural and historic interest which has warranted its designation, being that of a large Romanesque Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery of 1913-1916. The contribution made by its setting essentially derives from how this large building visually dominates the architecturally-mixed and comparatively modest surrounding streetscene.

6.3 The application property

The application property is of local significance to Heywood for its architectural and historic interest as former health offices of 1933, part of a small civic group of which the police station and former baths also remain. This significance is embodied in the original main block, in particular its publicly-visible front and side elevations, and its contribution to the architectural diversity of the surrounding streetscene. The late 20th century side extension is of little interest and therefore of low importance.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

7.2 Relevant policies

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 210 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 212 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Locally, Policy P2a (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, formally adopted on October 19, 2016, states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The application seeks consent for four self-contained apartments including alterations to fenestration on the side and rear elevations and demolition of part of the side extension to form one detached dwelling to the rear of the site. The submitted drawings should be referred to for the full details of the scheme.

8.2 Its effect

The proposal will deliver a sustainable, active use for the application building and thereby secure its future. As established in this report, its significance and contribution to the setting of the listed St Joseph's resides in the building's external envelope, specifically the 1933 main block and its publicly-visible front and side elevations. These will remain largely unaltered. The only changes will be rooflights on the rear elevation, of which there will be no views in the public realm, and alteration of the existing ground floor window in the south side elevation to a doorway. The changes are focussed mainly upon the low-importance side extension, which will be partly removed and altered to form a separate one-and-a-half storey dwelling detached from and to the rear of the main building, thereby better revealing the original form of the latter. It will still however retain its subservience to the original building.



Existing (above) and proposed elevations



8.3 Concluding statement

For the reasons given above, it is concluded the proposal will result in no appreciable change to the setting of St Joseph's, which will therefore be sustained and allow the, predominant role of the church to remain. In respect of the secondary matter of the setting of the locally-designated buildings, this will also be sustained for the same reasons. The proposal thereby meets the requirements of both national guidance and local planning policy and so merits approval without delay.